



**E-ROMNJA - THE ASSOCIATION FOR
PROMOTING ROMA WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

Annual Activity Report

2023



ABOUT US

We are a Roma feminist, a-political, and non-profit organisation that fights for the rights of Roma women and girls.

Our approach is intersectional, and we believe that no society and/or community can exist without women's participation in society and community.

We believe in the Roma girls and women's involvement in the development of the communities to which they belong.

MISSION

We fight for the **respect**, **integrity**, and **dignity** of Roma women.

We promote narratives, experiences, and histories reflecting the diversity of Roma women's experiences and their lives.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development and organisation are long-term processes through which our initiative groups are brought together to act in their collective interest. We find this component transversely in all the projects we implement.

What we have learned in the first ten years of activity is that to gain the trust and commitment of the community, we must be consistent, and permanently in touch.

For us, community development comes as an answer to the lack of involvement of the authorities. In the absence of services and support from institutions and authorities, Roma women organise themselves, show solidarity, and create alternative support systems.



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Ketaniphen - Empowerment and participation: grassroots citizenship led by Roma women

Ketaniphen is a project started in 2015 and is still ongoing. Financed by **Helsinki Deaconess Institute**, the project is implemented in **Valea Seacă** community, Bacău County.

Our goal: strengthening the local initiative group of Roma women and girls and empowering them through activities such as:

- community services organised by women for women: community lunch twice a week for 150 vulnerable people;



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STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- hygiene, birth control products, and rapid test kits distribution;
- monitoring the meetings of the City Council;
- workshops with Roma men from the community on topics such as: gender-based violence, education, and reproductive health;
- facilitating the access to health, social, and legal services for Roma women and girls;
- thematic workshops for Roma women and girls on topics of interest such as: healthy and toxic relationships, gender-based violence, maternal and reproductive rights, health and prevention, child / forced marriage, the importance of education.



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Reducing school dropout among Roma girls, through an intersectional approach

The aim of the project is to address the issue of school dropout among Roma girls by building a support and intervention system to protect them from various forms of abuse, increase their visibility, understand their problems within the system and enable them to achieve their own goals.



The project is implemented with the financial support of Canton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland in the communities of Giurgiu and Valea Seacă, for a period of 4 years, starting this year.

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Reducing school dropout among Roma girls, through an intersectional approach

Activities we carried out in the first year of the project:

- workshops with police officers to deconstruct prejudices and stereotypes professionals in the system have towards Roma people, to clarify what is tradition and what is abuse, when and how to intervene;



- at the community level: thematic workshops for Roma parents and girls, awareness raising campaigns, community lunches, festivals, cooking competitions and camps for girls.



ROMNJA POWER MONTH

Since 2019, between March 8 and April 8, we are organising **Romnja Power Month** - an umbrella concept adopted from our Romaniphen colleagues in Berlin.

The Roma Women's Month consists of organising events, debates, cultural activities, concerts, and parties to increase the visibility of Roma women in different spheres, such as art, culture, politics, community work, activism, academic environment, etc. This year, together with our groups of youth and women, we have organised different activities at the local level in Mizil, Giurgiu, and Valea Seacă.



PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

Together for the women's safety! - a multidimensional intervention project against gender-based violence

The project was implemented between 2021 - 2023 by **FILIA Center**, the **ANAIIS Association**, the **Front Association**, the **Transcena Association**, and **E-Romnja Association** - five organisations, members of the **Network for Prevention and Combating Violence against Women (V.I.F. Network)**, and was funded through the Active Citizen Fund Romania programme, financed by Island, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the SEE Grants 2014-2021.



The aim of the project was to consolidate the awareness, watchdog, monitoring, and advocacy activities of the Network for Prevention and Combating Violence against Women at the central and local levels through a multidimensional approach able to produce systemic changes in how the problem of gender-based violence is handled by the authorities and in how the society relates to violence against women.

PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

E-Romnja coordinated the **Capacity Building and Local Actions** activities, organising:

- meetings with the local public authorities in Mizil, Giurgiu, and Valea Seacă in order to put the issue of gender-based violence on the public agenda;
- community workshops and meeting with the Roma women to see the needs and issues they face at local level when it comes to gender-based violence, services and intervention;
- awareness raising workshops with Roma men in the communities on topics such as gender-based violence, equal opportunities, etc.;
- advocacy training with 12 Roma women from Mizil, Giurgiu and Valea Seacă, its purpose being of strengthening the local initiative groups and empowering them to fight against gender-based violence.



PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

DajPhen - Solidarity Networks for Roma women

The project was carried out by the E-Romnja Association in partnership with the **Roma Center for Health Policies – SASTIPEN** between 2021 - 2023 and benefited from a grant from the Active Citizens Fund Romania programme funded by Island, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the SEE Grants 2014 - 2021.

The hypothesis from which the project started was that **when the authorities do not develop support services** for Roma girls and women who go through the experience of motherhood, **women create informal networks of community support.**



PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

One of the main objectives of the project was to increase the access to reproductive health and maternity services of Roma women. Thus, throughout the two years of implementation, we organized:

- informational workshops for the Roma women on health rights, access to medical services, maternity, and family planning;
- pre and post natal training and support for Roma girls and women;
- activities to increase the visibility of Roma women's work and their activism within communities;
- workshops for men to increase involvement during their partner or wife' pregnancy and in the process of raising children;
- consultations with national, local, and county public authorities to improve medical services and to increase the access to services for Roma women;
- advocacy actions to improve health policies and reduce negative institutional practices towards Roma girls and women;
- training for teachers and health mediators on reproductive health and sex education;
- workshops addressed to Roma and non-Roma doctors to increase their involvement in the delivery of medical services.



For more information about this project, please visit: www.dajphen.ro

@credit photo: E-Romnja archive

PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

Integrated services for Roma people from vulnerable communities

The project was carried out between 2021 - 2023 by the **Save the Children Organization** (Project Promoter), the **E-Romnja Association**, and **Bahna City Hall**, and benefited from a grant provided by Island, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the SEE Grants 2014 - 2021.



For two years, E-Romnja has implemented **empowerment activities and thematic workshops with Roma people** from Bahna (Neamț County) and Breasta (Dolj County), **workshops with the local public authorities from the two communities, established and strengthened two local initiative groups, experience exchanges with Roma women** from Bahna and Breasta, **awareness raising campaigns** addressed to Roma, but also to the majority population through creative, non-formal tools (theatre-forum, photo-voice exhibition).



PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023

Facilitating acces to integrated services of education, health, employment, and empowerment for the vulnerable people in District no. 1 of Bucharest

The project is being implemented by the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Discript no. 1 of Bucharest, in partnership with E-Romnja and the 'Viață si Lumină' Foundation.

What we have done so far within the project:

- we carried out information and awareness raising activities for Roma women and men from the Chitila, Giulești and Străulești neighbourhoods on topics such as: discrimination, civic rights, human rights, gender equality, domestic violence, reproductive health;
- established and strengthened an initiative group by training the Roma women in community leadership, empowering them and teaching them how to get more involved in community life, how to prioritize community issues, how to represent the community before the authorities, how to participate in the public meetings of the local Council and how to put community issues on the agenda of the public administration.




PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023


Choose to be involved! Participation through education for democracy

The project was implemented by the **Transcena Association** in partnership with **E- Romnja** between 2021- 2023 through the Active Citizens Fund Romania programme, financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014 - 2021.


The project's goal was to increase access to civic education and participative democracy among middle school and high school students and young teachers in Bacău, Călărași, Giurgiu, Prahova, and Bucharest.



Educational resource packages that integrate education through theatre as a tool for developing students' social and civic skills have been developed and tested.



Actions of civil involvement with pupils from 12 schools have been organised.



Training sessions with teachers from 12 schools have been organised to develop interactive teaching abilities within the process of forming students' civic and social skills.

INTERSECTIONALITY

As Roma women, we have identities and experiences based on **intersection between gender, class, ethnicity, skin colour, religion, language, background, disability, etc.** Intersectionality is a traversal concept in our feminist work, therefore, we wish to **bring a feminist intersectional perspective in all our interactions, in the work at the local level with the groups of women, young women and men, in the relationship with the civil society and public authorities.**



We believe that intersectionality is an instrument that **deconstructs** the homogeneous images created by society for women and men, Roma and non-Roma, hetero and LGBT+. At the same time, we believe that concepts such as intersectionality, are meant to **highlight how oppressive systems like racism, classism, sexism, etc., act against the most vulnerable people.** Through our actions, we advocate for the intersectionality theory to be included in the anti-discrimination legislation or integrated into strategies, measures, projects and programmes.

CAUSES | ACTIONS

March 8 - 'Our uterus is not your profit!' protest

Together with other feminist collectives, we protested to raise awareness on the difficulties of getting an abortion in a state hospital, during International Women's Day outside the government headquarters in Bucharest. We believe that any form of restricting access to abortion is a form of violence against women.

'Our womb is not your profit!'

'Compulsory maternity = forced labor!'

'Capitalism kills!'

'One woman falls, we all jump to help!'

Our slogans:



#multumescpentruflori



CAUSES | ACTIONS

March 25 - 'Romania educated, not discriminated against!' protest

The demonstration was organised in response to the letter submitted by the Romanian Orthodox Church and 12 other Churches in Romania to the Ministry of Education, requesting the removal of the words 'diversity' and 'sexual orientation' from the text of the new Education Law.

We asked for an **inclusive education, without discrimination, without censorship, aligned to national and international legislation.**



CAUSES | ACTIONS

‘A better place for Roma LGBTQ+ people in social movements’ manifest

In anticipation of the Pride organized in Bucharest, we launched a call for solidarity with the LGBTQ+ Roma community, which faces discrimination within the community. We drew attention to the lack of representation, marginalisation and exclusion of Roma people from the feminist and queer movements and denounced the attempts to invisibilise or delete our histories. In the name of a **dignified**, **inclusive** and **intersectional Pride**, we **challenged the community to self-reflection, unity and real solidarity.**



@credit photo: E-Romnja archive

CAUSES | ACTIONS

‘Dilemmas of intersectionality’ debate

In different countries, Roma LGBTQ+ is facing racism along with homo*lesbo*transphobia, classism and sexism, trying to fit in the gadje standards, struggling to find a community or space where to feel a sense of belonging.

The debate was organised together with the **Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts**. Roma feminists and activists from Europe participated and tried to answer the following questions:

How do we fit in different spaces? How to make them more inclusive? Who holds the responsibility of deconstructing them from whiteness? When it's the right time to talk about racism along with other intersectionalities?



CAUSES | ACTIONS

‘International Safe Abortion Day’ protest

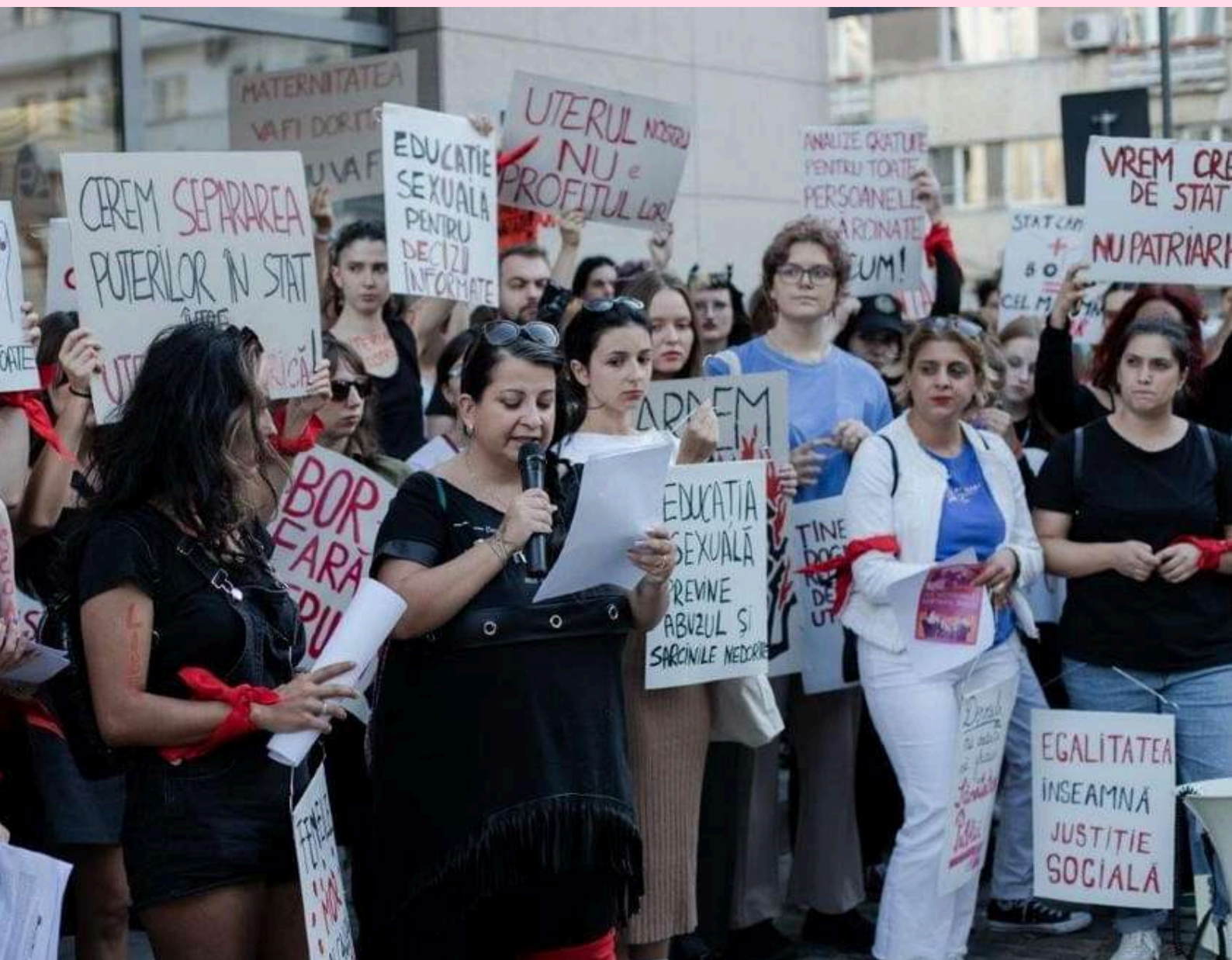
On **September 28**, on the occasion of the **International Safe Abortion Day**, we protested in front of the Ministry of Health to defend our reproductive rights and to demand:

free access to public reproductive and sexual health services / banning ultraconservative and misogynist propaganda / stopping the privatisation of the health system / free and safe abortions in public hospitals / sex education in schools

The protest took place in the context of two tragic events happened in the past few months in Romania, that showcase the **systemic violence against vulnerable women** in the form of **racism, classism and misogyny**.

The first one took place in July 2023, when a young deaf Roma woman **was denied maternity care** at the public hospital in the small town of Urziceni and **gave birth on the sidewalk** in front of the hospital.

The second event took place in Botosani, where a 25 year-old pregnant woman **was denied safe abortion services and died from it**.



CAUSES | ACTIONS

**Together for Women's Safety March - 9th edition,
organised by The Network for the Prevention and
Combating of Violence Against Women**

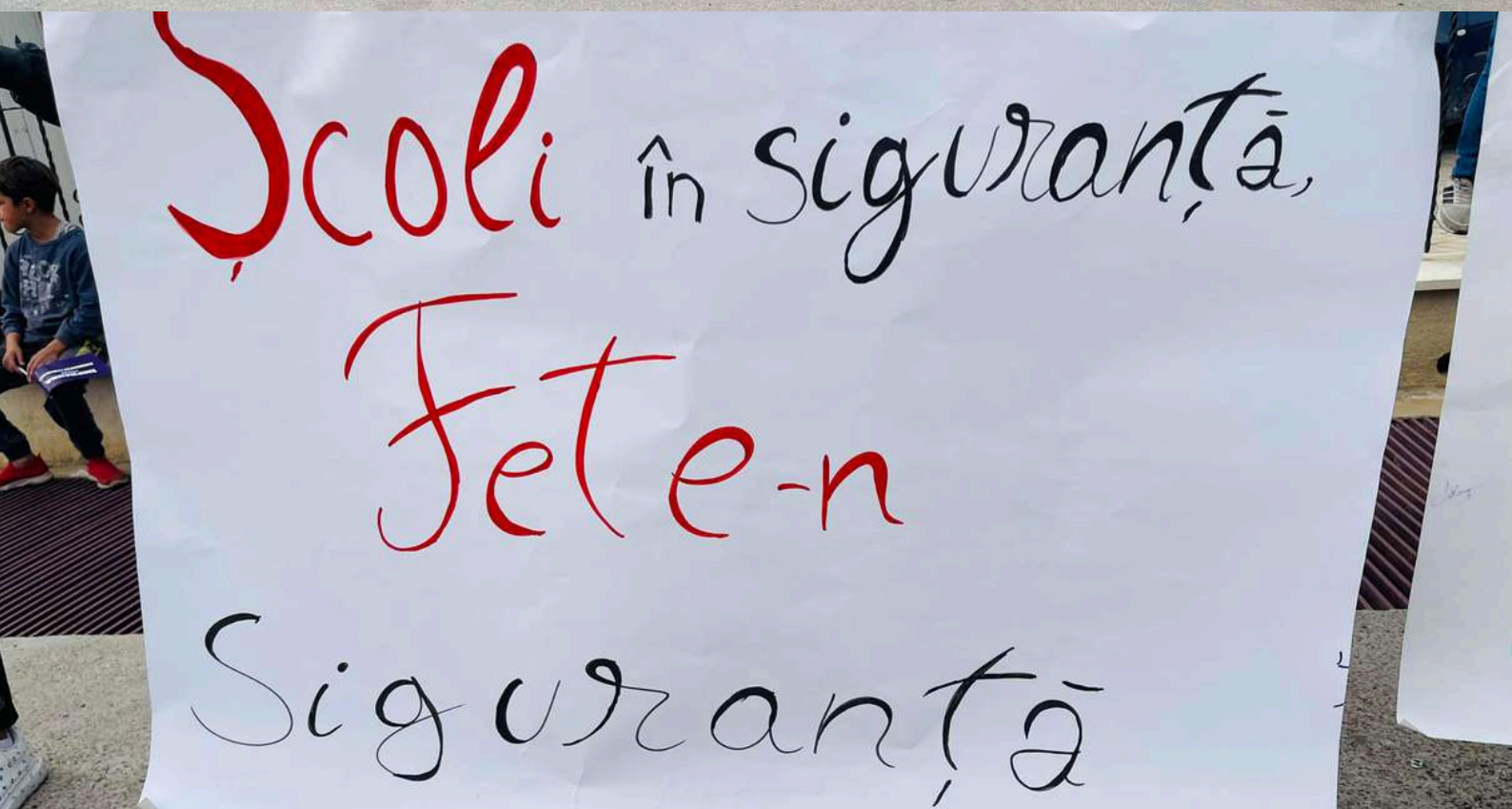
Together with feminist organisations and collectives,
we demanded:

- funding for prevention programs and adequate services for survivors of gender-based violence;
- collaboration between rural local authorities and central authorities;
- fair intervention, not cultural motivation.

Roma girls and women from Mizil and Valea Seacă mobilized themselves and protested at the local level, loudly shouting **"Violence has no color!", "Violence is not cultural!"**







CAUSES | ACTIONS

The March for Housing

At the beginning of November, together with the **Common Front for the Right to Housing**, we organised the **March for Housing** to ask the authorities social housing, rent caps and to stop the unfair, illegal and forced eviction without proper relocation.

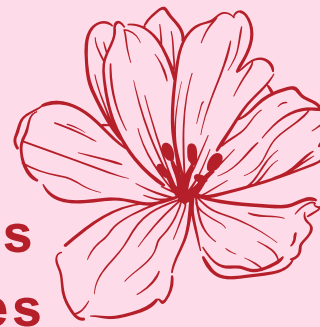
We have shouted:

Social housing, not empty words! Stop evacuations!
Housing for all! Housing, not humiliation!



@credit photo: FCDL

CAUSES | ACTIONS



Traditional occupation of Roma florists endangered by the Romanian authorities

We drew the attention of the District no. 2 Administration of Bucharest to a draft decision that endangered the Roma flower selling - a traditional occupation practiced by Roma women from generation to generation, from mother to daughter.

The respective project provided for a significant reduction in the number of flower shops managed by Roma families (more than 100 kiosks to be permanently closed), without the public administration coming up with solutions to protect and promote the Roma intangible cultural heritage, without relocation or creating fair opportunities for Roma florists.

We have participated in public consultation meetings, sent an open letter to the mayor of District no. 2 and the members of the Local Council, and ran an awareness campaign on Social Media to highlight the dramatic situation faced by Roma women practicing this occupation.

The subject got the attention of some journalists who emphasised the racism of the authorities' measures and interventions, **but the problem is far from being solved.**

CAUSES | ACTIONS

I was only 11 years old when I learned to make flower bouquets from my grandmother. I didn't focus on anything but school and work. A year ago my mother passed away and I remained at the flower shop because there was no one left to stay here. I love being a florist more than anything. All my childhood is here, I have the best memories related to the flower shop. The decision to close the flower shop would affect us a lot. I'm the only one who works, I support myself and my grandmother. Now I'm expecting a baby and I don't even want to think what our life would mean without this flower shop. It would break my soul!

Roma florist, 19 years-old

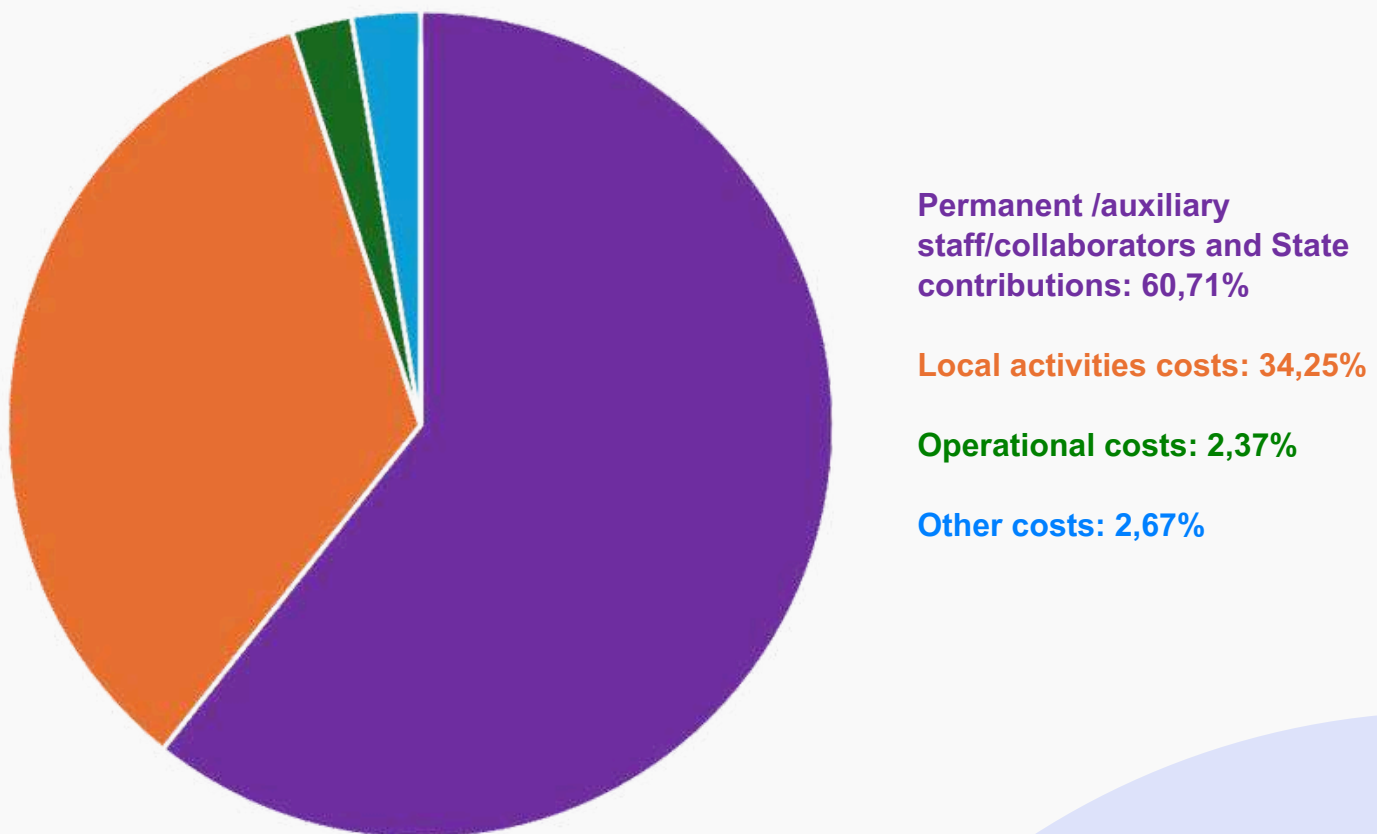


FINANCIAL REPORT:

In 2023, the total income of E-Romnja was **1.991.135,20 lei**, as follows:

- financed projects: **1837709,75 lei**
- donations / sponsorships / others: **153.425,45 lei**

Distribution of expenses in 2023:



Funders in 2023:

EEA Grants 2014 - 2021 (Active Citizens Fund - Romania),
Google, Helsinki Deaconess Institute, Sigrid Rausing Trust,
ERASMUS, Canton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland,
3,5% individual donors, in-kind kind donors

E-ROMNJA TEAM

Carmen Gheorghe /// Anca-Georgiana Nica
Georgiana Aldessa Lincan /// Roxana-Magdalena Oprea
Carmen Alexe /// Anca Constantin /// Mădălina Bădăraș
Ionela Pădure /// Estera Gușă /// Mirela Gheorghe
Luiza Nicolae /// Francisca Vasile /// Laura Voinea
Natalia Căldăraru /// Luminița Feraru /// Cristina Dumitrache
Ioana-Valentina Bîrlă /// Lucia Dinu
Elisa Dinu /// Lizuca Dinu /// Lăcrămioara Călin

WE GIVE OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- the Roma women, girls and boys from the local initiative groups in Mizil, Giurgiu and Valea Seacă communities;
- all the volunteers who contributed to our activities;
- all the people who have made individual donations (cash, redirecting 2% or 3,5% of their income, products, equipment etc.);
- our allies in our common fight and to all those who follow and encourage us to continue our mission;
- last but not least, we thank our funders at home and abroad who are constantly supporting our work.

**JOIN OUR MISSION OF EMPOWERING
ROMA GIRLS AND WOMEN, BY DONATING HERE:**

RON ACCOUNT: RO 67 RZBR 0000 0600 1518 6865

EURO ACCOUNT: RO 64 RZBR 0000 0600 1757 0694

DOLLAR ACCOUNT: RO 46 RZBR 0000 0600 1819 7250

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